

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of selecting symbols on a television display, the method comprising:

receiving a video signal that comprises closed caption data, wherein the closed caption data includes a plurality of symbols;

displaying the closed caption data on the television display;

storing at least portion of the closed caption data in a buffer;

receiving, via a remote control device, first control instructions to maintain the displayed closed caption data on the television display until the occurrence of a selected event, wherein the selected event is one of: receipt of second control instructions to resume the display of the closed captioned data in the video signal, the passage of a predetermined amount of time, or receipt of third control instructions requesting the selection of at least one of the symbols;

receiving, via the remote control device, the third control instructions to select at least one of the symbols;

highlighting the selected symbols on the television display; and

transmitting the selected symbols to a database system.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the remote control device is hand held.

3. A television, comprising:

a remote control device for receiving control instructions from a user; and

a controller for receiving and displaying a video signal that comprises closed caption data, wherein the closed caption data includes a plurality of symbols, wherein in response to receiving first control instructions from a user, the controller maintains a selected portion of the closed caption data on the television display until the occurrence of a selected event, wherein the selected event is either: receipt of second control instructions to resume the display of the closed caption data in the video signal, the passage of a predetermined amount of time, or receipt of third control instructions requesting the selection of at least one of the symbols, and wherein, in response to receiving, via the remote control

device, the third control instructions to select at least one of the symbols, the controller highlights the selected symbols on the television display.

4. The television of Claim 3, wherein the controller transmits the selected symbols to a database system.

5. The television of Claim 4, wherein the database system is an Internet search engine.

6. The television of Claim 4, wherein the remote control device is hand-held.

7. A method of selecting symbols on a television display, the method comprising:

receiving a video signal that comprises data, wherein the data includes a plurality of symbols;

displaying one or more of the symbols, wherein the displayed symbols are selectable by a user on a symbol-by-symbol basis;

in response to a user request, maintaining one or more of the displayed symbols on the television display;

in response to a user request, selecting one or more of the displayed symbols on the television display; and

transmitting the selected symbols to a database system.

8. The method of Claim 7, wherein the database system is an Internet search engine.

9. The method of Claim 7, additionally comprising:

searching the database system for information based at least in part upon the selected symbols; and

displaying the results of the search.

10. The method of Claim 7, additionally comprising transmitting the selected symbols over the Internet to a remote computer.

11. The method of Claim 7, wherein the video signal is digital.

12. The method of Claim 7, additionally comprising highlighting the selected symbols on the television display.

13. The method of Claim 7, additionally comprising transmitting the selected symbols to an external device.

14. The method of Claim 13, wherein the external device is an information retrieval system.

5 15. The method of Claim 7, additionally comprising storing at least a portion of the received video signal in a buffer.

16. The method of Claim 7, wherein the video signal is in accordance with the EIA/CEA-608-B standard.

10 17. The method of Claim 7, wherein the video signal is in accordance with the EIA-708-B standard.

18. The method of Claim 7, wherein the user initiates the request to select the symbols by identifying a location on the television display.

15 19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the symbols are selected by determining which of the symbols in the video signal is displayed at the identified location.

20. A television, comprising:

an interface for receiving control instructions from a user; and

20 a controller for receiving and displaying a video signal that comprises data, wherein the data includes a plurality of symbols, wherein in response to receiving first control instructions from a user, the controller maintains at least some of the symbols on the television display, and wherein the controller receives second control instructions to select one or more of the symbols on the television display.

25 21. The television of Claim 20, wherein the television transmits the selected symbols to a database system.

22. The television of Claim 21, wherein the database system is an Internet search engine.

23. The television of Claim 21, wherein the database system performs the acts of:

30 searching for information based at least in portion upon the selected symbols; and

automatically displaying the results of the search.

24. The television of Claim 20, wherein the video signal is digital.

25. The television of Claim 20, wherein the television transmits the selected symbols over the Internet to a computer.

5 26. The television of Claim 20, wherein the television highlights the selected symbols on a display.

27. The television of Claim 20, wherein the television transmits the selected symbols to an external device.

10 28. The television of Claim 20, wherein the controller stores at least a portion of the received video signal in a buffer.

29. The television of Claim 20, wherein the user initiates the request to select the symbols by identifying a location on the television display.

30. The method of Claim 29, wherein the symbols are selected by determining which symbols are displayed at the identified location.

15 31. A system for selecting symbols on a television display, the system comprising:

means for receiving a video signal that comprises data, wherein the data includes a plurality of symbols;

means for displaying the data;

20 means, responsive to a user request, for maintaining a selected portion of the data on the television display; and

means, responsive to a user request, for selecting at least a portion of one of the words on the television display.

25 32. The system of Claim 31, additionally comprising means for transmitting the selected portion to a database system.

33. The system of Claim 32, additionally comprising:

means for searching the database system, wherein the selected symbols are used as keywords of the search; and

means for automatically displaying the results of the search.

30 34. The system of Claim 31, additionally comprising means for transmitting the selected symbols over the Internet to a computer.

35. The system of Claim 31, additionally comprising means for highlighting the selected symbols on the television display.

36. The system of Claim 31, additionally comprising means for transmitting the selected symbols to an external device.

5 37. The system of Claim 36, wherein the external device is an information retrieval system.

38. The system of Claim 31, additionally comprising means for storing at least a portion of the received video signal in a buffer.

10 39. The system of Claim 31, wherein the user initiates the request to select the symbols by identifying a location on the television display.

40. The system of Claim 39, wherein the symbols are selected by determining which of the words in the video signal is displayed at the identified location.